



County Administrative Office Governmental & Legislative Affairs

Josh Candelaria
Governmental & Legislative
Affairs Director

March 24, 2017

The Honorable Jim Beall
Chair, Senate Transportation and Housing Committee
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 249 (Allen) – As introduced February 7, 2017 – OPPOSE

Dear Senator Beall:

San Bernardino County regrettably must oppose SB 249, which would make significant changes to the Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation grant program.

Off-Highway Vehicle recreation is a growing activity and is especially important to San Bernardino County. With our expansive deserts and forests, OHV recreation provides up to an estimated \$70 million in local economic activity, which supports our rural communities through sales of gas, food, accommodations, supplies, accessories and equipment.

The OHV grant fund has provided significant funding to our Sheriff's Department over the years for purchases of equipment and for additional staffing to provide enforcement and education, particularly on high-use three-day weekends. As OHV recreation grows, and areas to ride are reduced through urban encroachment and the expansion of areas set aside for conservation, conflicts become more likely. Enforcement and education are essential to maintain environmental protection, while allowing users to safely and sustainably enjoy their choice of family outdoor recreation.

This grant fund is self-supporting through the collection of taxes and fees from OHV users themselves. Allowing these funds to be diverted for other uses would reduce enforcement and education, and may have the unintended consequence of increasing conflicts and potential environmental harm. It is also unfair to those who pay their taxes and fees in good faith to support OHV recreation.

The current program has become a national model for funding and supporting an important and sustainable family activity. The wholesale changes to the program proposed in SB 249 are unnecessary and intentionally defeat the entire purpose of the program.

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Further, eliminating the requirement that the OHV Commission hold quarterly public meetings, and instead requiring meetings "periodically" runs contrary to transparency in government and unfairly limits the public's voice in how their tax dollars are used and in the fundamental right of having their voice heard in decision-making.

For the above reasons, the County of San Bernardino respectfully must oppose SB 249. If you have any questions regarding the County's position, please do not hesitate to contact Josh Candelaria, Director of Governmental Affairs at (909) 387-4821 or jcandelaria@sbcounty.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert A. Lovingood", is enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

ROBERT A. LOVINGOOD
First District Supervisor
Chairman, San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors

c: Members and Consultants, Senate Transportation and Housing Committee
Honorable Ben Allen
County of San Bernardino Legislative Delegation